

HR Weekly Podcast 10/5/07

Today is October 5, 2007, and welcome to the HR Weekly Podcast from the State Office of Human Resources. This week's topic concerns the various insurance benefits available for state employees.

The month of October is an open enrollment period. During an open enrollment period which occurs in odd-numbered years, state employees have more insurance benefit options than they have during a regular annual enrollment period. Any benefits changes made in October will be effective January 1, 2008.

State employees can choose from 3 different health insurance plans: 1) the state's standard health plan; 2) the savings health plan; and 3) a Health Maintenance Organization or HMO. This year, state employees can drop health coverage for themselves or for their dependents.

Each of the different health insurance plans includes prescription drug benefits with a co-payment when using a pharmacy in the plan's network or the plan's mail order pharmacy. Also, the plans include various preventative health benefits, such as well-child care, weight management programs, worksite health screenings, and "Free and Clear, Quit for Life," a tobacco cessation program.

The State Dental Plan is offered free to state employees. Family members can be covered for a monthly premium. State employees can subscribe to Dental Plus, a supplemental dental insurance plan that provides a higher level of coverage at affordable rates. Once state employees enroll in the State Dental Plan or Dental Plus, they are locked in the coverage for 2 years until the next open enrollment period.

The State offers flexibility to state employees in meeting their life insurance needs because they can participate in Basic Life, Optional Life, or Dependent Life insurance. Also, the state plan offers Basic Long Term Disability Insurance and Supplemental Long Term Disability, so that state employees can protect some of their income in the event that they become disabled.

State employees can enroll in Long Term Care Insurance which is an optional insurance that helps pay for care at-home or in an adult day care center, assisted living facility, nursing home, or hospice. State employees can enroll in Long Term Care Insurance for themselves, their spouses, parents, or parents-in-law.

State employees can stretch their medical and dependent care dollars by enrolling in the State's MoneyPlus program, which includes IRS-approved, tax-favored medical spending, health savings, or dependent care accounts.

State employees who are eligible to retire can continue health, dental, life, and long term care insurance into retirement. When eligible for Medicare, state employees may change health insurance to the State's Medicare Supplement, which coordinates with Medicare to pay more of their eligible medical expenses.

As a reminder, state employees can change insurance coverage from almost anywhere with Internet access using the State's new MyBenefits online enrollment system located at the Employee Insurance Program's website, www.eip.sc.gov. The MyBenefits system is a convenient, fast, easy, and secure

way to make insurance changes. Throughout the year, state employees can access their accounts and review their benefits, update contact information, and change beneficiaries.

If you should have any questions regarding insurance benefits or enrolling in the MyBenefits online system, please contact the Employee Insurance Program at 734-2516, or visit them at www.eip.sc.gov.